

cloud of dust and smoke hides the horizon. This salient has thus become the centre of the Crater at Petersburg. Soon after the lodgment at its foot, to which they had been repulsed, on the 18th ult., the idea of springing a mine here occurred to the enemy (originating with Lieutenant-Colonel Pleasants, a coal miner of Pennsylvania), and now under the complete cover afforded, and with the racket at *Fort Hell*, they have at last effected it. It was to have been exploded while it was yet dark; but the fuse went out and had to be relit. The immediate loss to us is 256 men from the Twenty-second South Carolina Regiment of Elliott's South Carolina Brigade, and the detachment still there from Pegram's Battery. A field piece of ours here carried up by the explosion, falls across the enemy's line, so close are they at this point. The smoke and dust have not cleared away before Colonel L. M. McAfee, in command of Ransom's Brigade, is moving the Twenty-fifth, now on our right under Major W. S. Grady, and the Fortyninth joining them, under Lieutenant-Colonel Flemming, to the first ridge between the Crater and Petersburg, and in a few minutes they are in position to receive any advance in that direction, while the Fifty-sixth, under Captains Lawson Harrill, acting Colonel, and R. D. Graham, acting Lieutenant-Colonel, followed by the Thirty-fifth and Twenty-fourth, deploy in single file, and move up the line to the right to meet any demonstration in their front, contributing by their steady fire materially to hold the enemy in check, while a forlorn hope is being organized for a countercharge. It was sure death for one of them even to start to the rear from this (north) side of the crater. Elliott's fine Brigade, though yielding ground to the avalanche of earth thus thrown against them, are not stampeded, but immediately take position on the south and also facing the crater, similar to McAfee's to the north and west, leaving a gap for the play of our reserve artillery at Blandford Cemetery.

The explosion has made an excavation along our line 170 by 65 feet. The cloud of dust and smoke is seen rolling away against the rising sun; but all is still quiet along Burnside's line. It had been intended that his colored division should lead the assault; but this was countermanded for fear of the